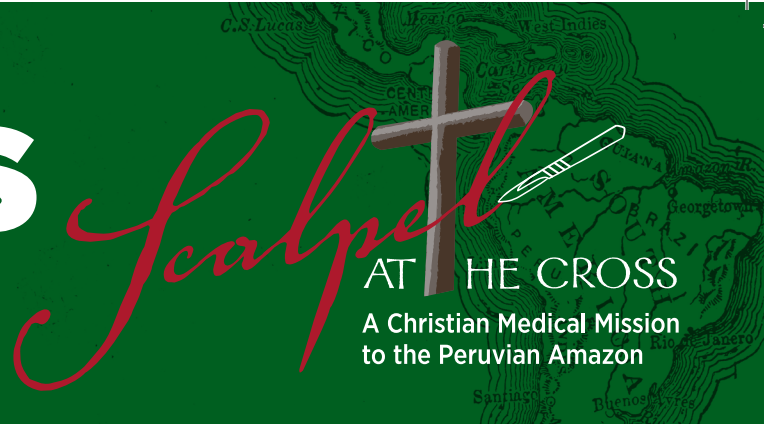


# SCALPEL'S EDGE



A GIFT OF LIGHT, HOPE AND SURGERY TO PERU

SPRING 2021 | ISSUE 33

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“ It was remarkable that coincident with their appeal, in God's providence, strategically perfect land became available for purchase from a neighboring Christian mission... ”

## MILLION DOLLAR VISION OP&OR Miracle Campus

By Peter A. Cole, M.D. - President, Scalpel At The Cross

By our 20th year, Scalpel At The Cross (founded in 2004) seeks to break ground on a campus expansion, accommodating growing needs of our jungle surgical ministry. This article is indeed the announcement of our Capital Campaign called OP&OR Miracle Campus, kicking off this summer! Scalpel's leadership is thrilled to bring this challenge to friends and family for four key reasons:

- 1) The people of Pucallpa, Peru pleaded with us for this project, and we are excited for partnership.
- 2) The fulfilled dream will be the first Orthotics, Prosthetics and Ortho Rehab Center in Pucallpa.
- 3) We're launching into mission "development" from "relief and rehabilitation".
- 4) OP&OR is a sign of God's confirmation of the Scalpel ministry.



I am humbled that half a dozen leaders in the Peruvian community approached me to consider building a facility where people with little means could get care they witnessed from Scalpel At The Cross for the past 17 years. There are tens of thousands of these patients, and in this region, it wouldn't be appropriate to refer to them as marginalized; they're at the mean standard of living or worse. Local leaders asked me to consider partnership which would accentuate our reliably loving Scalpel family and ways of delivering healthcare. They

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Continued from Cover

## MILLION DOLLAR VISION

seek something greater than overrun, dilapidated and dysfunctional government hospitals, and something better than prevalent corrupt and abrupt methods of patient care. Among the group are two doctors, two pastors, an attorney, and a local businessman. The Holy Spirit was at work, clear as day, and I listened.

It was remarkable that coincident with their appeal, in God's providence, strategically perfect land became available for purchase from a neighboring Christian mission, and plans for the campus and its budget are underway. We are studying and planning in the first half of 2021, with the capital campaign launch this summer.

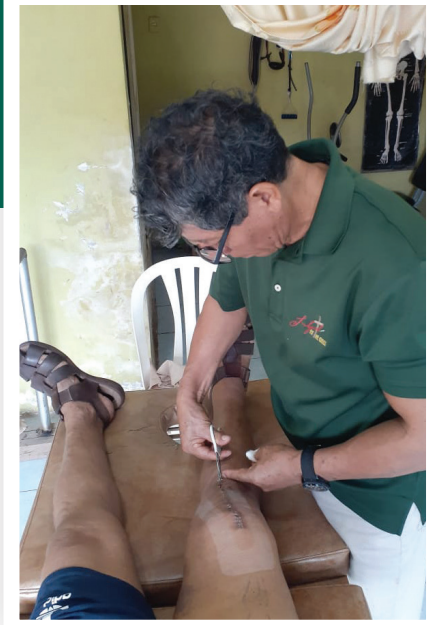
An orthopaedic surgical ministry is a labor and technology intensive mission to coordinate and run. Those who have participated on our campaigns know the symphony that must be played—it's extraordinary, if not mind blowing. By God's grace we have run 50 of them now; and by God's mercy we have treated hundreds and lost none, despite major limb reconstructions, trauma surgeries, and joint replacements performed in harrowing, austere environments. This is our labor of love!

However, we are acutely aware, trip after trip, case after case, that something vital is missing: braces, prostheses, physical therapy, rehabilitative services. These ancillary orthopaedic extensions of care we regard as vital here in America, are absent in the jungle. Many times, I explain to a patient, "I can do the best surgery possible for you, but if without physical therapy and rehab, it will all be for naught." Though this is somewhat hyperbole, the exhortation carries important truth that the best result is not possible without

these adjuncts to surgery. The same is true for proper bracing and prosthetic options. We are striving for better, indeed best possible. God wants our best! Over the years we have attracted key experts in these fields, and they bring the intelligence necessary for Scalpel to deliver on the goals of our vision. It is hard to imagine how our Lord has knit together people from such various walks to make possible the very dream at hand. It is so exciting to contemplate.

What do I mean that as a ministry we are moving from "relief and rehabilitation" to "development" with this project? In the book, *When Helping Hurts*, authors Corbett & Fikkert explain various approaches to poverty alleviation. Whereas relief is provision of a material or service to recipients who cannot provide for themselves (Scalpel At The Cross 2004-2010), rehabilitation refers to restoration of the people and their community in partnership with the mission for materials and services desired (Scalpel At The Cross 2011-2017). The latter results from education and implementation of employees and infrastructure. In the third and most effective stage called development, a mission enters its most mature state in which the communities served begin to embrace the responsibility of furnishing materials and services to their own, aspects of our work which we happily came to recognize a couple of years ago. Development is not done to or for people, but with people, to become more of what God created them to be, giving them the ability to fulfill their calling of glorifying God through their own life and work.

Lastly, I wish to express a strong feeling of confirmation by our Lord to get to the point of launching this OP&OR Miracle Campus based on the miracle chain of circumstances that make it plausible. I am reminded of the prophet Samuel describing to Saul, before



“Once these signs are fulfilled, do whatever your hand finds to do, for God is with you.”

(1 SAMUEL 10:7)

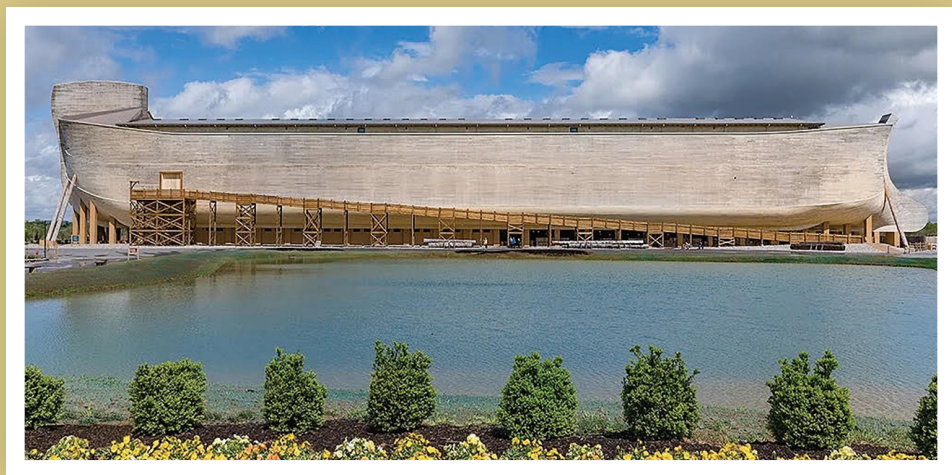
he became King of Israel, all of the signs of God he would encounter upon following the prophet's instruction, "Once these signs are fulfilled, do whatever your hand finds to do, for God is with you." (1 Samuel 10:7) Indeed we at Scalpel are listening, following signs, responding as the occasion requires; and we are assured God is with us. Although it seems beyond aspirational to raise a million dollars, I have great conviction this will manifest in the next two years. Although it seems beyond possible to plan and execute well-stewarded facilities, their maintenance, and employed models of service to our patients, our leadership has been constantly reminded how our God specializes in the impossible. We remain in prayer toward that end. Please join us prayerfully during this time of preparation for the OP&OR Miracle Campus Campaign.

*Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. (Mark 11:24) ✝*

# ENCOUNTERING JESUS:

## Scalpel Embarks on Another Book Adventure

*By Mark R. Hedrick – Board Member, Scalpel At The Cross*



Everyone enjoys an adventure. Well, at least I do. The opportunity to experience new, different people and places can be exhilarating. The thrill of the unknown and of the unexpected can peak the senses and engage and sharpen the mind and spirit.

One of my more favorite memories of such an experience was traveling from North Carolina to Indiana for an extended family event in the pre-COVID fall of 2019. We decided collectively to stop at the Ark Encounter in Williamstown, Kentucky. The Ark display there is quite a sight to see. Spanning 510 feet in length, 85 feet in width, and 51 feet in height, it is a full-size model based on the biblical dimensions and description of the Ark God instructed Noah to construct before the worldwide flood.

Our day was full of multiple encounters with displays and videos of the workings of the ark, the friendly staff, various unique animals at the zoo, and an enjoyable lecture and Q&A session with none other than Ken Ham, the

founder of Answers In Genesis and the Ark Encounter. I have read the account of Noah and the flood many times over the years, but there was something very special about this opportunity to step back in time and experience what it must have been like in Noah's day.

The Ark Encounter, seems a very appropriate title. Much can be "encountered" there. What exactly is an encounter? Another Noah, Noah Webster, defines "encounter" as "a particular kind of meeting or experience." This experience is also defined as "face-to-face" and "unexpected."

At Scalpel At The Cross, we have enjoyed such encounters over the years on our mission trips to Pucallpa. The Peruvian Amazon, with its sights and sounds, tastes and smells, is unique, exciting, and filled with the unexpected. Personal interactions with the people we love and serve there are face-to-face and truly special. The spiritual impact can be life-changing. Many people hear about our Scalpel trips,

watch website videos, and read Scalpel's Edge newsletter, but there is nothing quite like going on a mission trip to Peru and encountering it all firsthand.

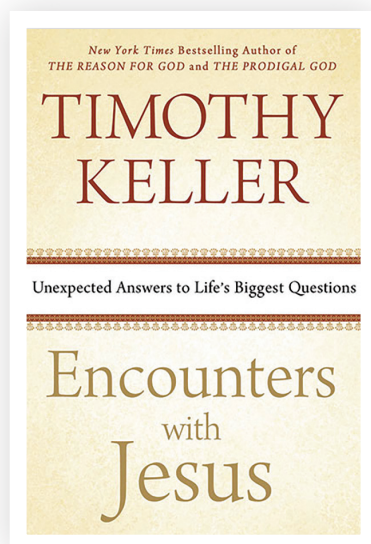
Out of all the possible encounters of life, what could be better than to personally encounter Jesus? We talk about and read about Jesus. We go to church and bible studies. We read our devotions and pray. But do we really encounter Him? To experience Him face-to-face and in an unexpected way should be the desire of every Christian.

Prompted by spiritual growth from studies of "Knowing God" and "When Helping Hurts", the leadership of Scalpel has begun a new study of "Encounters with Jesus" by Timothy Keller (2013). Through this study, masterfully led on Zoom by our very own "Timothy", board member Tim Lindquist, we are looking in-depth at familiar scripture passages of the earthly ministry of Jesus.

The wedding feast in Canaan. The Samaritan woman at the well. The grieving sisters at the death of Lazarus. Mary Magdalene and the empty tomb and others. Each part of this 10-part series resonates with life-changing interactions for the people of those times with the Messiah.

A premise for Keller's book is that Jesus wants to provide answers to life's toughest questions for us, and "the best way to do that is to see how Jesus explained Himself and His purposes to people He met – and how their lives were changed by his answers to their questions." Keller continues by stating "we can best discover the life-changing grace and power of Jesus if we look at what He has accomplished in





the main events of His life.” By doing so, this can move us “from an acquaintance with Jesus as a teacher and historical figure to a life-changing encounter with Him as redeemer and savior.” We hope to find “unexpected answers to life’s biggest questions”, discovering what Jesus really

wants to teach us about Himself and about ourselves.

Ultimately, we will not truly experience Jesus face-to-face this side of heaven, but by studying and meditating over His word as we are doing, we hope to “encounter”

Jesus here on earth as the people of His time did. We invite you to join us by contacting our staff. We also covet your prayers as we earnestly desire to grow in our faith and knowledge of Jesus so that we may be a greater witness for Him to others in our ministry to the people of Peru. ✝

## PRAY FOR PERU

HEIGHTENED RESTRICTIONS REINSTATED AS SECOND WAVE OF COVID-19 HITS PERU

### NUEVAS MEDIDAS

APLICAN DESDE EL 29 DE ENERO AL 12 DE FEBRERO

#### NIVEL ALTO

- Piura
- Loreto
- Lambayeque
- La Libertad
- San Martín
- Ucayali
- Madre de Dios

#### RESTRICCIONES:

**Domingos:**  
Vehicular particular

**Toque de queda:**  
⌚ 9:00 p. m. a 4:00 a. m.

#### AFORO:

- Casinos y tragamonedas, gimnasios, cines y artes escénicas: **30%**
- Artes escénicas en espacios abiertos: **50%**
- Tiendas en general (centros comerciales, galerías, conglomerados, tiendas por departamento): **40%**  
\*Se permite delivery
- Tiendas de abastecimiento de productos básicos, supermercados, mercados, bodegas y farmacias con aforo limitado: **50%**
- Restaurantes: (**50%** en zonas internas y **60%** al aire libre)
- Iglesias: **20%**
- Bibliotecas, museos, monumentos arqueológicos, centros culturales y otros: **50%**
- Actividades de clubes y asociaciones deportivas: **40%**

Gobierno del Perú

- In January, the daily tally of coronavirus cases quadrupled.
- Hospitals throughout the country are at capacity.
- President Francisco Sagasti states the pandemic is the worst health and economic crisis Peru has experienced in 100 years.
- The Peruvian government announced three alert levels with restrictions to face the second wave of COVID-19.
- Lima is one of ten regions placed at extreme alert level with lockdown from January 29 - February 14, including strict measures reminiscent of the first lockdown in March 2020.
- The government of Peru is negotiating with various pharmaceutical companies around the world to procure COVID-19 vaccines as cases continue to spike.
- Amazon regions, including Pucallpa, are experiencing a dengue fever epidemic in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, reporting the highest number of cases of dengue since 2017.

*In the midst of the global crisis, the need for excellent orthopaedic care continues. Please pray for us to safely resume medical campaigns.*

# FULFILLING GOD'S MISSION IN DIFFICULT TIMES

*By Isaac Mendoza Ruiz, Peruvian Medical Coordinator*



Greetings to our friends and family of Scalpel At The Cross. It is a privilege for me to share about the work I have been doing here in Pucallpa.

In 2009, I met this amazing group of surgeons doing incredible work here in Pucallpa, motivated by the love of Jesus Christ. They shared the idea of working alongside them, and I loved the idea. So began my work as a volunteer with Scalpel At The Cross. I attended every campaign, and these medical teams made a great impact on my life. Over the years, God opened my eyes, and I began to understand that He had called me to be part of this mission. In 2016, I started working with Scalpel At The Cross as a full-time staff member in Pucallpa.

As the Peruvian Medical Coordinator, I assumed responsibility of post-operative patient follow-up care that was obviously not an easy task. Thankfully, during this time, Scalpel At The Cross sent the Porch family as missionaries to support me. It was with my friend, Dan Porch, that I discussed patient care beyond surgical

and physical care. Something was missing; there was an emptiness that surgery could not fill because the problem was spiritual. However, I was so focused on learning my role and caring for patients' physical well-being that, while I shared the gospel with patients, I was not able to disciple them.

Dan and I began discussing how to be more intentional with our patient interactions. What could we do with patients who gave their life to Christ? That is where the idea was born to involve fellow pastors who led churches in our patients' neighborhoods. We started to connect patients with these pastors for discipleship. Under this context, work has been done, but there is still much to do. In reality, approximately 40% of our patients attend a church in Pucallpa. My goal is to form a small team of leaders who can work with me to disciple patients who give their life to Christ, and then integrate them into a local church family.

March 15, 2020 changed our lives; in the blink of an eye everything changed. We were sent home as voluntary prisoners under very strict quarantine. Medical campaigns were halted, businesses closed, and in-person gatherings were suspended. People began to despair when they saw family dying. I entered a time of depression because of everything that was happening. We were in absolute quarantine for 6 months. People called me to attend to them, but the government had not authorized the opening of physical rehabilitation centers. Even though I was not able to see patients in person, thanks to technology, all the patients from our 2019 and 2020 campaigns were treated in follow-up appointments through video.

When the government gave rehab centers the green light, obviously there were a number of changes. We needed permission from the health ministry to open the rehabilitation center with protocols for COVID-19 care like this sign:



The pandemic has also caused people to think about death and life after death. Because of this, during 2020 and 2021, more patients than ever have heard the gospel. Many of my patients who I attended in the clinic tested positive for COVID-19, two days after their care. God is very good to me, and I continue to remain healthy. He is giving me the opportunity to share the gospel. May God continue to bless our mission, Scalpel At The Cross. ✝



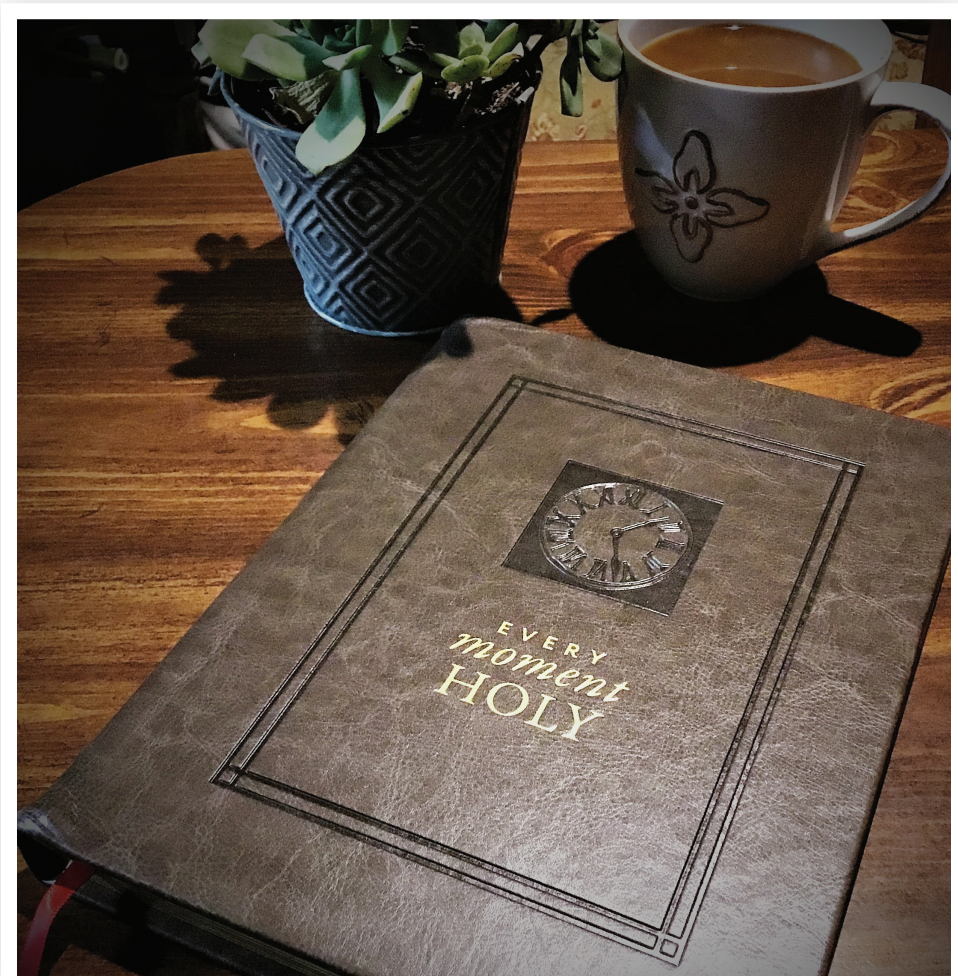
# EVERY MOMENT HOLY

By Nancy Cole, Director of  
*Halo Ministries & Prayer Posse*

Last Christmas we were the blessed recipients of collective liturgies by Douglas McKelvey entitled, *Every Moment Holy*. To give you a taste of its rich content, here is one liturgy called "The Ritual of Morning Coffee":

"Meet me, O Christ, in this stillness of morning. Move me, O Spirit, to quiet my heart. Mend me, O Father, from yesterday's harms. From the discords of yesterday, resurrect my peace. From the discouragements of yesterday, resurrect my hope. From the weariness of yesterday, resurrect my strength. From the doubts of yesterday, resurrect my faith. From the wounds of yesterday, resurrect my love. Let me enter this new day, aware of my need, and awakened to your grace, O Lord. Amen."

Ah, I have literally savored these prayerful words...particularly as I reflect on the suffering incurred last year with many losses resulting from both pandemic and cultural, political, and economic upheaval. A cacophony of messages filled with indications for something, followed by contra-indications against the same something, has vied for my constant attention, scrutiny, discernment, wisdom, and ultimate decision-making. Where does the voice of truth lie in this conundrum of choices? Amidst this landscape of chaos, I cannot imagine the despair of those who profess unbelief in a loving, sovereign God who rules with divine intentionality. Despite knowing He will administer grace sufficient to weather life storms and that His divine power has given me everything for a godly life, I still find myself peeling



through levels of submission at the core of my soul, asking whether I truly trust this hardship is needful and best?

With fears unquelled and pangs of insecurity, I both reason and confess that I have yet to give possession of my present concerns over entirely to the will of Father God. While I purpose these cares to be "swallowed up," as it were, in God's best will, I still manage to hold fast to their burdensome weight. O that God might do a mighty work as I sink into His will and allow Him to use trials and afflictions to circumcise and transform my heart with its bent towards prideful self-sufficiency. May I believe every pain works its divine purpose. I must instruct my heart to "rise up" and be delivered from enslavement to angst and dismay (Isaiah 8:11-14, "For the Lord spoke thus to me with His strong hand upon me, and warned me not to

walk in the way of this people, saying: 'Do not call conspiracy all that this people calls conspiracy, and do not fear what they fear, nor be in dread. But the Lord of hosts, Him you shall honor as holy. Let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. And He will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense...").

As the Lord has condescended to catch my tearful groans on behalf of our country and world, He has allowed me in some small measure to disassociate from the clamor, bewilderment and confusion of the world, and simply ponder...is this what learning to yield myself to the God of the universe in absolute measure is all about? Are my mind and affections being vanquished by Him entirely, to eventuate in gentle, settled quietness I've never truly grasped? Is the benefit of deep personal crucifixion (where suffering works to bring good to others and

glory to God) actually transpiring within me? However one interprets, I sense I am in process...of being extricated from: inquiry, wailing, logic, word wrangling, proactivity, solutions...so when distilled down to its essence, I seek nothing but the purposes of our great God in accordance with His perfect will.

G.D. Watson puts it this way, "When we suffer so severe and so long that we become dead to it, and divinely indifferent as to how much we suffer or how long it will continue; when the suffering soul reaches a calm, sweet carelessness, when it can inwardly smile at its own suffering, and does not even ask God to deliver it from the suffering, then it has wrought its

blessed ministry; then patience has its perfect work; then the crucifixion begins to weave itself into a crown."

Beloved brothers and sisters, my crown is still being knit. That said, I am taking steps to repent over failing to place myself fully under God's omnipotent hand, to the restful blessedness of His perfect plan. Absolute yielding, in the shadow of the Almighty, will bring settled calm and hope in hardship I so desperately seek. God is always the only One who can deliver. As we bring our praises and prayers to the Lord, please join me in intentionally making every moment a holy one as McKelvey exhorts! ✝

FOR THE LORD SPOKE THUS TO ME  
WITH HIS STRONG HAND UPON ME,  
AND WARNED ME NOT TO WALK IN  
THE WAY OF THIS PEOPLE, SAYING:  
"DO NOT CALL CONSPIRACY ALL THAT  
THIS PEOPLE CALLS CONSPIRACY,  
AND DO NOT FEAR WHAT THEY FEAR,  
NOR BE IN DREAD. BUT THE LORD  
OF HOSTS, HIM YOU SHALL HONOR AS  
HOLY. LET HIM BE YOUR FEAR, AND  
LET HIM BE YOUR DREAD. AND  
HE WILL BECOME A SANCTUARY  
AND A STONE OF OFFENSE...

ISAIAH 8:11-13

## PRAISE:

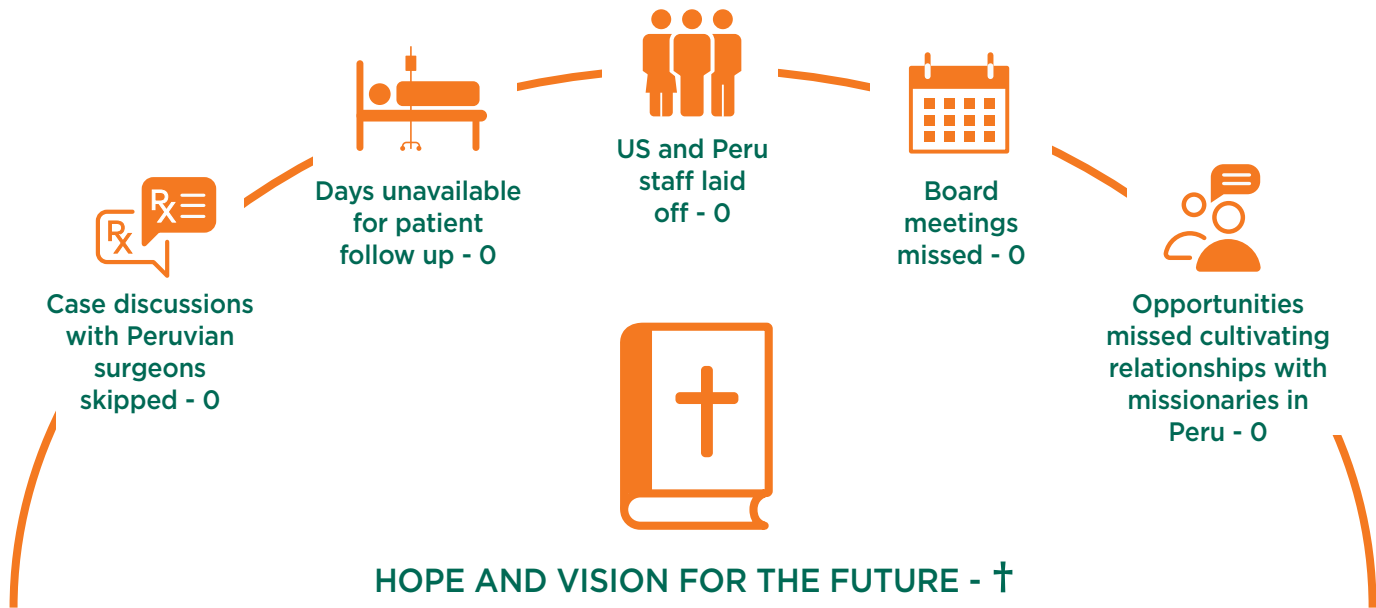
- Finished 2020 in excellent financial standing thanks to outreach & communication to our donor base, showing successful retention & growth
- Investment in Bloomerang (non-profit data management system) has brought efficiency & ease to record keeping & reporting
- Time afforded us for personal touch points with our donors, while travel to Peru has been suspended
- Heartfelt commitment/involvement by Scalpel staff & board to adapt to virtual fundraising initiatives
- That we adapt well to requirements of COVID testing, increased paperwork, & obligatory quarantine for team member travel
- Over new restrictions similar to those made initially last March (lockdowns and curfews imposed by the government) as Peru experiences 2nd COVID-19 wave
- For recruitment of our own anesthesiologists for future campaigns as Hospital Amazonico only has one anesthesiologist available for emergency cases
- For leadership & staff at Hospital Amazonico, and others, as they continue meeting the challenging circumstances of COVID-19 amidst the reality of a dengue fever epidemic (purportedly the worst outbreak since 2017)

## PRAYER:

- That earthly loss experienced by our Peruvian patients & missionary friends results in great eternal gain & recognition that we can lose nothing that is found in Christ
- That conditions would stabilize for return to Pucallpa for medical campaigns in 2021, as the need for orthopaedic surgical care is greater than ever
- For wisdom, financial provision & generosity as we break ground on the OP&OR Rehab Center
- For Peru's next general election (April 11, 2021) in light of political instability which ensued a few months back, eventuating in three Presidents holding office within a one-week timeframe

MARCH 2021

# MISSION VITALS

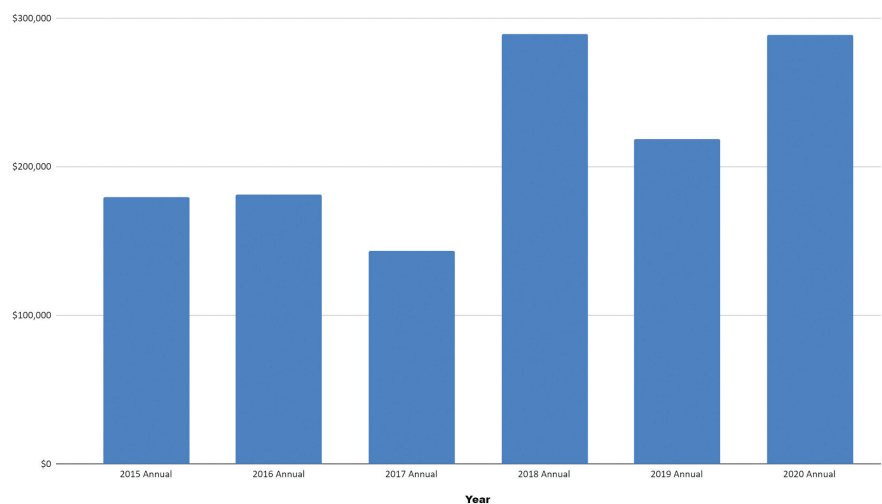


## FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT:

*Dear friends and family,*

We are blown away by your generosity. The incredible work we plan to do moving forward could not be accomplished without your help. We want to let you know we are unveiling a Recurring Gifts Program in 2021 to help secure our sustainability as an organization. You may set up hassle-free, automatic donations through our online giving portal. Thank you once again for your support, and may God bless and prosper you!

2015-2020 YTD Annual Summary (Includes Board giving)



Online giving is easy and convenient at: [giving.ncsservices.org/scalpelatthecross](https://giving.ncsservices.org/scalpelatthecross)  
or contact us at: **P.O. Box 558436, Miami, FL 33255**  
**[www.scalpelatthecross.org](https://www.scalpelatthecross.org) | 305-922-4486**